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MIGRATORY BIRD
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REPUBLICAN STEERING COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3807

May 23, 2006

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The Honorable R. James Nicholson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Alberto R. Gonzales
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Nicholson and Attorney General Gonzales:

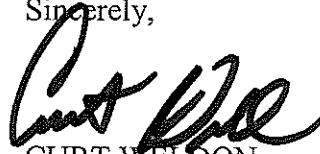
I am writing to express my outrage over the revelation that the personal information of a reported 26.5 million military veterans was stolen from the residence of a Department of Veterans Affairs employee. This stolen data apparently includes Social Security numbers, information that could be used to commit identity theft against many of the brave men and women who have served our country in uniform. This is an intolerable situation.

As the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Justice, and other federal agencies move to respond to this outrageous development, I strongly encourage you to make clear to the American people that any attempt to use the stolen data or to compromise the personal information of any veteran will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. In addition, I believe that it would be appropriate for a reward in the amount of \$50,000 to be offered to any person volunteering information that leads to the prosecution and conviction of the individual responsible for the theft. It is imperative that veterans' faith in their government to keep their personal information secure be restored. These measures could perhaps instill some confidence in Americans that everything possible is being done to contain the damage from this incident.

In the meantime, I feel safe in saying that it is the expectation of every Member of Congress that steps will be taken by the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that this can never happen again. Additionally, veterans who believe that their information has been compromised should be offered every reasonable form of assistance by the VA in verifying whether or not such is the case. If in fact a veteran's personal information is compromised as a result of the recent theft, a mechanism for rectification should be in place and available.

Given the nature of their sacrifices and service to our country, the responsibility to safeguard the personal information of veterans is especially paramount. I look forward to learning of the swift action you are taking to resolve this terribly unfortunate situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Weldon", written in a cursive style.

CURT WELDON
Member of Congress